GUIDELINES FOR INCIDENTS OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE INVOLVING STUDENTS

I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for incidents of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse or smoking involving students.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Drug is defined in Maryland law as a controlled dangerous substance that is regulated under the Maryland Controlled Dangerous Substances Act, a prescription medication, or a chemical substance when used for unintended and harmful purposes.

B. A Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) property means any school or other facility, including grounds owned or operated by MCPS, MCPS buses, and other MCPS vehicles, and the facility, and/or grounds of any MCPS-sponsored activity involving students.

C. Smoking means to use or carry any lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, or other tobacco product of any kind. This includes devices that simulate smoking of any kind.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Communication
At the beginning of the school year, students and parents and/or guardians will be informed in writing of Montgomery County Board of Education policies, MCPS regulations, and pertinent laws designed to create a smoke-free environment for teaching, learning, and working that is free of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

B. Identification and Assistance

1. If, in the judgment of the teacher, a student is incapable of functioning properly in class, that student is sent to the school health facility where school health referral procedures are followed and the principal is notified.

2. State law encourages students to consult with educators on drug/alcohol abuse problems. The law affords protection to the student who seeks information or counseling on how to overcome drug abuse problems from a teacher, counselor, principal, or other professional educator. Information received or observations made by the educator during a drug counseling or student information session are kept confidential and are not admissible in any proceeding.

3. The student should be encouraged at the earliest appropriate time to seek help from his/her parents and/or guardians. The decision to involve parents and/or guardians should be arrived at jointly by the student and educator unless, in the judgment of the educator, the mental or physical health of the student is immediately and dangerously threatened by drug abuse. If such danger is imminent, the principal, parents and/or guardians, and school community health nurse/technician should be notified so that appropriate medical action may be taken.

C. Reporting

1. All incidents concerning possession, use, or distribution of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs or smoking on MCPS property are reported to the principal/director or designee.

2. If the principal/director or designee has reasonable cause to suspect there may be a violation of the law, it is considered a serious incident, and she/he follows protocols set forth in MCPS Regulation COB-RA, Reporting a Serious Incident, for notifying parents, appropriate MCPS offices, police, or emergency services; reporting the incident; and releasing information.

D. Handling Suspicious Materials
If an MCPS employee comes into possession of a substance they suspect to be alcohol or another drug, the material is handled in the following manner:

1. The substance is placed in an envelope or otherwise contained and sealed.

2. The date, time, and nature of how it was obtained is indicated on the container. However, if the material was acquired from a student during a drug counseling or information-seeking conference, the name of the student from whom the suspected drug was received is not noted.

3. The suspected substances will be turned over to the principal/director or designee who will follow procedures set forth in MCPS Regulation COB-RA, *Reporting a Serious Incident*.

**E. Consequences**

1. Students who possess, use, or distribute, alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs on MCPS property shall be disciplined in accordance with the *MCPS Code of Conduct*.

2. As a condition for participating in extra-curricular activities or accepting leadership positions in school-sponsored groups, a student may be required to agree to additional restrictions and consequences for alcohol, tobacco, or other drug abuse on locations other than MCPS property.

*Regulation History:* Formerly MCPS Regulation No. 285-10, December 29, 1976; revised October 1986; revised December 19, 2013; revised August 11, 2014.